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No. 13

Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 22, 2000, at 11 a.m.

House of Representatives

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2000

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PEASE).

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DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

February 14, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable EDWARD A. PEASE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

□

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1287. An act to provide for the storage of spent nuclear fuel pending completion of the nuclear waste repository, and for other purposes.

□

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to but not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the mi-

nority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for 5 minutes.

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PASSAGE OF THE MARRIAGE TAX ELIMINATION ACT, A GREAT VALENTINE'S DAY PRESENT

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, of course today is known as Valentine's Day. It is a great day for those who care for one another. It is a day of the heart. This past week we had some important action in this House of Representatives which affect 28 million married working couples who because of their heart pay higher taxes.

The American people have often told me that they are frustrated; they think it is unfair that 21 million married working couples on average pay \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married.

That really is a fundamental question. Is it right, is it fair, that under our Tax Code, 25 million married working couples on average pay \$1,400 more?

Now, I represent the south side of Chicago and the south suburbs in Illinois, and folks back home they tell me that \$1,400 is a year's tuition for a nursing student at a community college in Illinois; it is a washer and a dryer; it is several months' worth of car payments; it is 3 months of day care, but it is higher taxes, money that is taken from married couples, just because they are married.

That is wrong. Of course, Valentine's Day is today and today is the day that

we can celebrate the fact that the House passed H.R. 6, legislation wiping out the marriage tax penalty for 25 million married working couples. Let me explain how the marriage tax penalty works.

If one is single, of course, they file as a single person; but when they get married, they file jointly. They combine their incomes. The way our Tax Code works is if a couple is a machinist and a schoolteacher with identical incomes, say a machinist makes \$31,000, if he stays single he pays in the 15 percent tax bracket; but if he meets and marries a public school teacher with an identical income of \$31,000, their \$62,000 combined income pushes them into the 28 percent tax bracket. They pay the average tax penalty of almost \$1,400 just because they got married.

Right now the Tax Code discourages marriage by punishing it with financial penalties. That is wrong.

This past week, the House passed H.R. 6, and I want to commend the leadership of the House, Speaker DENNIS HASTERT, for moving a stand-alone, clean, marriage tax elimination legislation.

There is no other extraneous provisions. There are no excuses like the President used last year when he vetoed our effort to wipe out the marriage tax penalty. We deal with one issue, that is, wiping out the marriage tax penalty for 25 million married working couples.

I would point out that H.R. 6 helps married couples in a number of ways. If one looks at who pays the marriage tax penalty, one half of married couples

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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